

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER FORT POLK, LOUISIANA 71459-5341

"ARMY CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROFESSIONALS-HELPING LEADERS MEET THE MISSION"



CPAC INFORMATION BULLETIN NUMBER 64

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T is for the Trust the Pilgrims had so many years ago.

H is for the Harvest the settlers learned to grow.

A is for America, the land in which we live.

N is for Nature and beauty which she gives.

K is for Kindness, gentle words, thoughtful deeds.

S is for Smiles, the sunshine everyone needs.

G is for Gratitude...our blessings great and small.

is for ideas, letting wisdom grow tall.

V is for Voices, singing, laughing, always caring.

is for Indians, who taught them about sharing.

N is for Neighbors, across the street, over the sea.

G is for giving of myself to make a better me.

Judith A. Lindberg



CIVILIAN ATTITUDE SURVEY

WHAT DID FORT POLK EMPLOYEES SAY?

In the fall of last year, we asked each of you to participate in the Army's web based Civilian Attitude Survey. Over 33,000 employees and close to 7,000 supervisors, including Fort Polk employees and supervisors "logged on" and completed the survey.

When we asked you to participate, we promised to provide you the results. What follows is a summary of the Fort Polk results of the survey. The results include (1) Survey Highlights; (2) a Composite Summary; and (3) the identification of the ten most favorable and unfavorable items. They are depicted in such a manner that a comparison can be made with Army/MACOM and previous year results where data is still available.

SURVEY FINDINGS

At Fort Polk, the survey came at the heels of one of the largest reductions-in-force the Army has had in years. As a consequence, the results were down in a number of categories when compared to the 2001 results. Despite this fact, overall Fort Polk employees were happier than most total Army and FORSCOM employees. To explain, Fort Polk employees with their Civilian Personnel Service, jobs, first-line supervisors, management, discipline/Grievance/EEO procedures, training and development, physical conditions, organization, performance culture, and diversity. Not only that, the overall workforce morale at Fort Polk was higher than the total Army and

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FORSCOM norms. Moreover, Fort Polk employees were most satisfied with approaching their supervisors about work and least satisfied with the processes used to fill vacancies at the installation/activity. Like the rest of Army and FORSCOM, Fort Polk employees expressed their displeasure with activity surrounding the filling of positions and selections for promotion. However, more Fort Polk Employees found the vacancy announcement section of SPOL and resume builder useful and user friendly than total Army employees.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

See attached survey results graphs.

Here are a few major highlights.

THE FORT POLK WORKFORCE IS FOCUSED ON ITS MISSION

- Eighty-three percent of employees indicated that they know how their work relates to the installation's missions and goals compared to 79% of all Army employees and 80% of FORSCOM employees. Q80.
- Ninety-two percent of employees clearly understand who their customers are, Q81.
- Eighty-four percent of employees know what is expected of them in their jobs. Q77.
- Eighty-four percent of employees agree that the people in their workgroup work to do a good job, while seventy-two percent believe that their work group works well together and seventy percent opine that their work group is well run. Q47,49,48.
- Seventy-seven percent of Fort Polk employees believe their jobs make good use of their abilities and seventy-two percent of them find their work challenging. Q14,16.
- Overall, seventy-four percent of employees are satisfied with their jobs compared to 67% of all Army employees, 70% of FORSCOM employees, 68% of employees government-wide and 67% in the private industry. Q18.

MORE ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO OUR PERFORMANCE CULTURE

 Although overall 68% of employees responded favorably regarding our performance culture, in a number of areas fewer than half of employees

- responded positively to statements about recognition for performance. Yet, the responses of Fort Polk employees topped or equaled the Army and FORSCOM averages and were generally on-par with the government-wide averages.
- Forty-six percent of employees expressed satisfaction with awards and recognition. This was a 2% improvement over the 2001 experience.
- While 55% of employees felt that it was recognized when they did a good job, only 47% thought they would receive an award if they performed their job especially well. Q39,42.
- Only 45% of employees felt awards went to the people who earned them and just 35% felt employees were treated fairly with respect to awards. Q40,41.
- Eighty-four percent of employees responded that they knew what was expected of them and 78% indicated that their performance appraisal was a fair reflection of their performance. Q76,77.
- Only 39% of employees felt that corrective actions were taken when employees did not meet performance standards, this was still better than the Government-wide perspective of 27% and the Army and FORSCOM experience of 28%. Q75.

A SIZEABLE PROPORTION OF THE WORKFORCE IS CONSIDERING LEAVING THEIR CURRENT JOBS

 Twenty percent of employees reported that they frequently think about quitting their jobs, with 16% planning to retire as soon as they are eligible, 13% to take an early out if offered, and 10% planning to leave before retirement. Q15,106.

EMPLOYEES WERE REASONABLY PLEASED WITH THEIR LEADERSHIP

- More than 60% of employees indicated that they were satisfied with management compared to 43% government-wide, 49% Army-wide, and 51% FORSCOM-wide.
- Sixty-six percent of employees found their firstline supervisors satisfactory, compared to 63% Army-wide and 64% FORSCOM-wide.
- Sixty-one percent of employees opined that their civilian supervisors were concerned about their job satisfaction compared to just 45% of their military supervisors. Q65,66.

DIVERSITY RECEIVED HIGH MARKS. HOWEVER, EMPLOYEES WERE UNDECIDED ABOUT FAIRNESS

- Seventy-one percent of employees gave diversity high marks. In fact the rating was 6% higher than the 2001 experience, and 3% better than the Army and FORSCOM experience.
- Slightly more than 30% of employees were neutral regarding the question of "Fairness." This indicates that employees were undecided about this issue and may be the result of unfamiliarity with the issue, concerns about confidentiality, inconsistency, or perceptions of the issue as "average."

JRTC & FP MUST FIND BETTER WAYS TO RECRUIT AND DEPLOY TALENT

- Like the Army and FORSCOM experience, employees were least satisfied with the job placement/promotion system. Thirty-five percent of FP employees gave the system low marks while only 33% gave it a favorable rating.
- FP employees were clearly undecided whether the best-qualified employees were selected for promotion. Q36.

MORALE IS HIGH

 Despite having just implemented a major reduction-in-force, sixty-one percent of employees gave the workplace morale a high mark representing no change from the 2001 experience. This mark was 6% higher that the mark given by Army and FORSCOM employees.

USE OF SURVEY RESULTS

Your views will not go unnoticed. The survey results together with other information will be used to identify important program and policy changes that may be needed to meet the challenges of managing the workforce. In support of various DA and Command initiatives, the results will also be used to develop our Human Capital Plan and to measure and track progress and status in human capital management.

Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.

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Title 38 On-Call and Premium Pay

Implementation of Title 38 On-Call and Premium Pay, throughout the US Army Medical Command, MEDCOM, was effective October 31, 2004, for selected healthcare occupations.

At this time, the implementation of Title 38 applies to all MEDCOM/DENCOM activities employing civilian healthcare personnel, who are officially assigned to authorized positions of GS-0603, Physician Assistant; GS-0610, Registered Nurse; GS-0681, Dental Assistant; GS-0682, Dental Hygienist; and GS-0683, Dental Laboratory Technician, and who meet all elements of the eligibility criteria.

It is expected that by the end of the year, additional authorized positions will be expanded to include GS-0620, Licensed Practical Nurse; GS-0660, Pharmacist; GS-0180, Psychologist; GS-0631 Occupational Therapist; GS-0651, Respiratory Therapist; and GS-0633, Physical Therapist.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. General

Question 1-1. What does the medical and dental treatment facility commander have to do to designated employees eligible for Title 38 additional pay?

Answer. This is a two part answer.

Part I. Nothing is required from medical and dental activities for initial implementation. The civilian personnel data base (DCPDS) and the civilian pay system (DCPS) will recognize all covered employees on the rolls of the activity on the date of activation based on data provided by Headquarters, Medical Command (MEDCOM), Civilian Personnel Division (CPD). Therefore, medical and dental activities are not required to track gains and losses of employees or to scrub their on-board list of employees. However, medical and dental activity commanders must report the status of their collective bargaining with their union(s) on a weekly basis. Bargaining must be completed before Title 38 additional pay can be activated for bargaining unit employees.

<u>Part II.</u> After initial implementation, the local activity is responsible for identifying newly hired individuals eligible for Title 38 additional pay by use of the Army

Regional Tools, Gatekeeper Checklist and documenting eligibility for additional pay on the Request for Personnel Action (RPA), Remarks Section, Part D. Guidance on this documentation is provided in the Implementing Instructions.

Question 1-2. What is the Baylor Plan? **Answer.** The Baylor Plan is a Title 38 alternate work schedule that compensates covered employees for 40 hour basic work week, when actually working two regularly scheduled 12-hour tours between midnight Friday and midnight Sunday. This alternate work schedule was delegated for use to MEDCOM, however, is not supported by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service civilian pay system, and is not authorized for use in MEDCOM.

Question 1-3. Are additional pay earnings included in TSP deductions?

Answer. No. Per 5 CFR 1600.21 and 22 contributions are expressed in terms of a percentage of basic pay or a dollar amount per pay period. Therefore, additional pay earnings are not included in TSP deductions.

Question 1-4. What additional pay is included in worker's disability compensation for injured employees?

Answer. In establishing an employee's disability compensation the law recognizes certain pay in addition to basic pay, such as night differential, weekend differential and holiday pay. Other pay may also be include, such as hazard pay, dirty work pay, and quarters allowances and post differential for overseas employee. Overtime is not included. Final determination of what is paid is not a MEDCOM determination.

Question 1-5. Can a covered employee on official travel status perform work at the TDY station and earn Title 38 additional pay?

Answer. Yes, a covered employee on official travel orders to another site for any duration may work and receive Title 38 additional pay compensation. The general principal is that the covered employee may only earn additional pay from the medical or dental treatment facilities to which he/she is assigned. While on TDY orders, the covered employee is officially assigned to the parent organization, which submits the time and attendance report and pays the employee's salary.

2. On-Call Pay

Question 2-1. Is On-call duty status and on-call pay available for employees on a rotating roster who take phone calls at home from staff and patients, who are not required to return to the work place, may never

get a call, but may spend time actually performing work at home?

Answer. On-call duty status and on-call pay is appropriate only when the employee has departed the official duty station and is required to return to the work place. Employees performing work at home only when called upon, but not required to return to the official duty station, are not eligible for on-call pay, but are to be compensated with overtime in increments of 15 minutes for the actual hours of work. Such employees must keep track of the work

Question 2-2. Why does a Commander designate work units where on-call can be use?

Answer. The requirement that a medical or dental treatment facility, or its equivalent, commander designate in writing specific work units or entities where on-call is to be used has two purposes. First, it serves as an internal management control mechanism, establishing boundaries where on-call pay costs may be incurred. Second, it authorizes supervisors officially assigned within the designated work areas, to place covered employees officially assigned under the commander on on-call duty status and, as needed, to call back to work employees on an on-call duty status.

Question 2-3. Is an employee entitled to on-call pay, if the employee cannot be reached when called?

Answer. An employee who can not be reached immediately is not eligible for on-call pay for the entire duration of the scheduled on-call duty. The intent is for the supervisor to be able to reach the employee immediately by whatever agreed upon means, such as by beeper, cell phone, home phone, or email. The MEDCOM policy guidance does not prescribe a time limit for being able to reach the employee, but it is intended to be within a few minutes.

Question 2-4. At what point is on-call duty status suspended for an employee called back to work?

Answer. Upon arrival of the employee at the work area where the official duties are to be performed, on-call duty status is suspended and the employee begins to earn overtime. This rule is the same as applied when an employee reports to work during their usual administrative work schedule.

Question 2.5. Do all employees called back to work from on-call duty status get thirty (30) minutes to return back to the work area?

Answer. MEDCOM's policy guidance stipulates an employee called to return to work shall report to work within 30 minutes of less, unless otherwise agreed to by the supervisor. The intent is for employees to return to work as fast a practicably possible. Some

employees may return to work within 20 minutes. However, the 30 minute rule is intended to provide for employees whose normal commute from home to their work site is reasonable expected to take more than 30 minutes. The intent is to establish a reasonable expectation of the duration of time that it will take a specific employee to report to work upon being called back. The employee remains on-call duty status, until the employee reports to the work area where the official duties are to be performed for which the employee was called back. Once the employee reports to the work area, the official duty time (generally overtime) begins until released by the supervisor from work. Once released, the employee may return to on-call duty status, if the duration of the scheduled tour of on-call duty status has not expired.

Question 2-6. Can an employee placed on on-call duty status notify a supervisor that he is no longer available for on-call duty?

Answer. Yes, it is expected that when an employee is legitimately no longer immediately available or is incapacitated to return to work, that the employee notify the supervisor. The intent is to provide for those rare and few situations when an employee may have a family or home emergency or become ill, to notify the supervisor who will then terminate the on-call duty status and on-call pay.

Example 1. Employee on-call duty status on Saturday from 6 am until 6 pm, at 2 pm reports to the supervisor that a family member requires medical attention and that he/she is no longer available. The supervisor approves the request and stops the on-call duty status for the employee. The employee is entitled to on-call pay from 6am until 2pm; no entitlement for on-call pay after 2 pm.

Question 2-7. Can covered employees on official travel status be assigned on-call duty?

Answer. Yes, other than intermittent employees, covered employees may be assigned on-call duty. However, recommend you review any local policies on who may be assigned on-call duty before placing a covered employee who is on TDY to your medical or dental treatment facilities on-call duty status.

3. Night Differential Pay

Question 3-1. Will an employee lose the night differential pay if more that (8) eight hours of approved leave are taken during the pay period.

Answer. When less than (8) eight hours (7 hours and 45 minutes) of approved leave are taken during a pay period by a employee earning night differential, the employee shall be paid the night differential. However, when 8 or more hours of approved leave are taken during a pay period by a covered employee

earning night differential, the employee will only receive pay at the hourly basic pay rate for the total number of hours of leave taken during the pay period. Night differential shall not be paid for the hours of approved leave, when 8 or more hours are taken during a pay period.

Example 1. An employee on an 8 hour night differential tour takes 6 hours of approved annual leave during the two week pay period to attend to a family concern. Night differential is paid for the 6 hours of leave taken by the employee.

Example 2. An employee on an 8 hour night differential tour takes 16 hour of sick leave during the two week pay period. Employee receives the basic rate of pay for the 16 hours of approved leave, without the night differential.

Example 3. An employee on a 12 hour night differential tour takes 7.5 hours of approved annual leave during the two week pay period. The employee is paid night differential for the 80 hours of night differential tour, including the 7.5 hours of leave.

Example 4. An employee takes 12 hours of approved sick leave during the two week pay period. The employee is paid night differential for 68 hours, plus, the hourly rate of basic pay for the 12 hours of approved leave.

4. Weekend Differential

Question 4-1. Do I earn weekend differential pay for all or part of my 12 hour tour that begins at 4 pm on Friday?

Answer. Weekend differential pay is earned for the full 12 hour shift, because weekend differential is earned when any part of the tour occurs between midnight Friday and midnight Sunday. In this instance the 12 hour shift overlaps the weekend differential period of coverage between 1200 midnight Friday and 4 am Saturday, however, the employee earns weekend differential pay for the 12 hour tour. In this instance the employee also earns night differential for the work between 6 pm and 6 am, and since 4 or more hours of the shift occur between 6 pm and 6 am, the employee earns night differential of the entire 12 hour shift.

Question 4-2. Do I earn weekend differential pay for all or part of my 8 hour tour that begins at 9 pm on Sunday?

<u>Answer.</u> Weekend differential pay is earned for the full 8 hour shift, because weekend differential is earned when <u>any part of the tour</u> occurs between midnight Friday and midnight Sunday. In this instance the 8 hour shift overlaps the weekend

differential period of coverage from 9 pm until 1200 midnight Sunday, however, the employee earns weekend differential pay for the full 8 hour shift, including the hours worked after midnight Sunday. In this instance the employee also earns night differential for the work hours between 6 pm and 6 am.

Question. 4-3. Do I earn night and weekend differential for my 12 hour tour beginning at 4 pm Fridav.

Answer. Yes. The employee is entitled to night differential because four or more hours of the tour fall between 6 pm and 6 am. The employee is also entitled to weekend differential for the full 12 hour tour, since the shift overlaps midnight Friday until 4 am Saturday.

5. Overtime Pay

Question 5-1. How far in advance must overtime be scheduled (scheduled overtime vs. unscheduled overtime)?

Answer. The period of time that work must be scheduled in advance of the actual work being performed, to be considered scheduled overtime, is determined by local guidance explicitly addressing the scheduling of overtime or based on practices of the local entity. Local guidance may include language in collective bargaining agreements. Practices and method to schedule overtime may vary from work unit to work unit in the same medical or dental treatment facility, and may vary within work groups in a given work unit. In general, the scheduling of overtime under Title 38 should parallel the scheduling of overtime under Title 5.

Question 5-2. Must overtime be approved prior to being worked?

Answer, Under all circumstances, overtime must be approved prior to being worked. Management has a duty to not permit an employee to work in excess of their regularly scheduled tour without proper compensation and the employee has a duty to not presume overtime is approved for any work in excess of their regularly scheduled tour. The authority and procedures for approval of overtime is at the discretion of the local commander. Generally, overtime is approved when scheduled to be worked in advance, as in posting of work schedules in advance of the actual work being performed. Irregular, occasional, or administratively uncontrolled overtime, requires an explicit written or verbal prior approval from the supervisor directing the overtime be worked. Overtime is inherently approved for an employee placed on-call duty status and

subsequently called back to work. Prior approval is the rule; only in rare and few circumstances, such as a legitimate emergency evident to a reasonable person, may overtime be approved retroactively, subject to review and approval by a higher level official.

Question 5-3. When must the 2-hour minimum of overtime be paid?

Answer. The 2-hour minimum for overtime is granted when an employee is required to return to the work premises, presumably after having left the work premise at the end of the regularly scheduled tour. The work premise means the clinic, hospital or medical center. It does not mean having left the work area for another working area in the same clinic, hospital or medical center. The purpose of the 2-hour minimum is to compensate employees for the inconvenience of preparing for work and traveling back to their work stations.

Example 1. An employee whose regularly scheduled tour does not include the weekend, is placed on-call duty status and is required to return to the hospital on Saturday at 4 pm. The employee is entitled to the 2-hour minimum of overtime pay. Should the employee be released at the end of 45 minutes, the employee shall be paid two (2) hours of overtime. Should the employee be released after four (4) hours of duty, the employee shall be paid four (4) hours of overtime. The employee will also earn other categories of additional pay, such as weekend differential pay and night differential

Example 2. An employee whose regularly scheduled tour does not include work after 2 pm on Friday and who is not on on-call duty status, is called at home and asked to return to duty at 6 pm to assist in the emergency room. This constitutes unscheduled, irregular, administratively uncontrolled or occasional overtime, which requires the employee to return to the work premise and for which the employee is entitled to the 2-hour minimum of overtime pay. Should the employee be released at the end of 45 minutes, the employee shall be paid two (2) hours of overtime. Should the employee be released after four (4) hours of duty, the employee shall be paid 4 hours of overtime. The employee will also earn other categories of additional pay, such as night differential.

Example 3. An employee on a surgical team in the operating room, whose regularly scheduled tour ends at 1200 midday, is asked to work until the patient is moved to the recovery room. The 2- hour minimum of overtime is not appropriate, as the employee is already on the work premises, is not inconvenienced to travel from home, and shall be compensated for the actual hours of overtime worked in increments of

15 minutes. The overtime earned will be computed under Title 38 provisions. Other additional pay may be earned, depending on when the actual hours of work occur.

Example 4. An employee is asked by the supervisor to come in tomorrow one hour early to attend a mandatory discussion or training session, prior to the start of the employee's regularly scheduled tour. This may be considered unscheduled, irregular or administratively uncontrolled overtime, due to the short notice to the employee and for which the 2-hour minimum overtime is not appropriate because the employee is not being inconvenienced beyond the travel to work for the regularly scheduled tour. In this instance the employee is entitled to one hour of overtime compensation and not the 2-hour minimum overtime, because the employee is not being placed on on-call duty status, not being asked to return to the work site, or required to travel to work any more than would have traveled to report to the regularly scheduled tour. Additionally, if the additional hour is considered to have being "scheduled", the employee would also be paid one hour of overtime.

Question.4-4 Will I earn overtime pay for any work in access of eight (8) hours per day?

Answer. Employees will be paid overtime for actual work time in excess of their normal duty schedule and for which a time and attendance report is submitted with overtime properly coded to be paid. Employees on a regularly scheduled tour of 8 hours per day, 40 hours per week will be entitled to overtime pay for work in excess of 8 hours per day. However, if you are on an official alternate work schedule, the employee is entitled to overtime for the duration of actual work in excess of the regularly scheduled tour.

Example 1. Employee's regularly scheduled tour is 8 hour per pay, five days per week, in a pay period. The employee earns overtime in increments of 15 minutes for any work scheduled in excess of 8 hours per day. The employee earns overtime in increments of 15 minutes for any work not scheduled, but for which asked to extend the duty day, such as an additional 45 minutes to complete a specific task. The employee earns the 2-hour minimum, if after departing the medical or dental treatment facility, the employee is asked to return to work for less than 120 minutes, or earns the actual time worked if the employee works more than 120 minutes. The employee would also earn overtime for any work scheduled and performed in excess of 40 hours in a work week, such as work scheduled on the weekend. Any overtime earned must be properly documented and submitted on a time and attendance record for it to be paid.

Example 2. Employee works on an alternate work schedule of three 12 hour tours the first week, and three 12 hour tours and one 8 hour tour during the second week, in a pay period. The employee earns overtime in increments of 15 minutes for any work scheduled in excess of 12 hours during the 12 hour tours or in excess of 8 hours on the one day during the second week. Overtime, in increments of 15 minutes, is also earned for the duration of time for which the tour is extended beyond the regularly scheduled tour to complete a specific task. Overtime in increments of 15 minutes is also earned for any additional work scheduled, such as an additional 8 tour on a regularly scheduled day off, in addition to the regularly scheduled tour of 80 hours per pay period. The employee earns the minimum of two (2) hours, if after departing the medical or dental treatment facility, is called back to work for less than 120 minutes, or earns the actual time worked is worked more than 120 minutes.

<u>Question 4-5.</u> Can an intermittent employee be granted compensatory time off in lieu of overtime work?

<u>Answer.</u> No, intermittent employees are specifically barred by Title 38 from being granted compensatory time off in lieu of overtime worked.

Question 4-6. Can a supervisor request volunteers willing to accept compensatory time off in lieu of overtime?

Answer. The intent of Title 38 is to compensate employees for work performed in excess of their regularly scheduled tour. Only, upon receipt of a written request from an employee may they be granted compensatory time off in lieu of overtime. Offering compensatory time off, as a condition to working overtime, in any form, is contrary to the intent and spirit of Title 38 provisions.

Question 4-7. When must the compensatory time off in lieu of overtime be approved?

<u>Answer.</u> Prior approval is the rule; only in situations evident to a reasonable person may compensatory time off in lieu of overtime be approved retroactively. Except intermittent employees, covered employees may request and be granted compensatory time off in lieu of overtime for regularly scheduled, irregular, or occasional overtime work.

Example 1. An employee's tour in the operating room is extended for three hours in excess of the regularly scheduled tour until the patient is placed in the recovery room. The written request for compensatory time off in lieu of overtime submitted at the beginning of the employee's next regularly scheduled tour may be approved retroactively by the supervisor.

Example 2. An employee on-call duty status is called back to work on Saturday for 8 hours. The written request for compensatory time off in lieu of overtime submitted at the beginning of the employee's next regularly scheduled tour may be approved retroactively by the supervisor.

Excused Absence for Voting

The Federal Government has a longstanding policy of granting employees limited time off from work (i.e., excused absence) to vote in Federal, State, county, or municipal elections or in referendums on any civic matter in their community. Agencies have discretionary authority to grant excused absence to the extent that such time off does not seriously interfere with agency operations. Typically, polling places throughout the United States are open for extended periods of time. Therefore, excused absence should rarely be needed.

We normally receive a number of questions about excused absence for the purpose of voting in a Presidential election, held this year on November 2, 2004. In anticipation of these questions, we offer the following guidelines when considering excused absence for voting in unusual situations:

- Generally, where the polls are not open at least 3 hours either before or after an employee's regular work hours, supervisors may grant a limited amount of excused absence that will permit the employee to report for work 3 hours after the polls open or leave from work 3 hours before the polls close, whichever requires the lesser amount of time off. An employee's "regular work hours" should be determined by reference to the time of day the employee normally arrives at and departs from work.
- If an employee's voting place is beyond normal commuting distance and vote by absentee ballot is not permitted, the employing agency may grant excused absence (not to exceed 1 day) to allow the employee to make the trip to the voting place to cast a ballot. If more than 1 day is needed, the employee may request annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence.

Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.

- Franklin D. Roosevelt

REMAINING HOLIDAY/LIBERAL LEAVE SCHEDULE FOR 2004

| HOLIDAY | DATE DESIGNATED | TRAINING/ LIBERAL LEAVE |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Veteran's Day | 11 November 2004 | 12 November 2004 |
| Thanksgiving Day | 25 November 2004 | 26 November 2004 |
| Christmas Day | 24 December 2004 | 23 December 2004 |
| New Year's 2005 | 31 December 2004 | 30 December 2004 |

For additional information pertaining to the holiday and liberal leave schedule refer to CPB 05-04 dated 5 January 2004.

MyPay Assistance/Customer Support

What kind of help does the DFAS Centralized Customer Support Unit provide?

For problems using myPay, or with your myPay PIN, contact the DFAS Centralized Customer Support Unit toll-free at 1-800-390-2348, or commercial at (216) 522-5122, or Defense Switching Network (DSN) at 580-5122. This support line is available Monday through Friday, 7:00 A.M. to 7:30 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. The Centralized Customer Support Unit can provide assistance on how to use the options available to you in myPay. The Centralized Customer Support Unit will also provide support for establishing and changing your PIN. For ALL other payroll information please contact your servicing pay office or your customer service representatives as shown below.

Who can help me with my pay account?

Questions concerning SPECIFIC PAY ACCOUNT INFORMATION should be directed to the servicing payroll office or to your normal customer service representative as follows:

Civilian Employees Your local Customer Service Rep

 Military Retirees
 1-800-321-1080

 Annuitants
 1-800-321-1080

 Military Former
 1-866-859-1845 or

Spouses <u>www.dfas.mil/money/garnish</u>

May I view and print my tax statement on-line?

This option is not available for Former Spouses or Non-Appropriated Fund Employees.

For Civilians: You can view, print and save your tax statements. The tax statement displayed on myPay is the end of year tax statement.

Additionally, if the tax statement displayed is incorrect, please contact your customer service representative. Any corrected tax statements issued will not be reflected on myPay. You will be able to access myPay and view your W-2 for one (1) year after you are no longer in a pay status or separated.

Retirees: You can view, print and save your tax statements. The tax statement displayed on myPay is the end of year tax statement. Additionally, if the tax statement displayed is incorrect, please contact your customer service representative.

For Active/Reserve Military: You may view, print and save your W-2 Wage and Tax Statement online. You may access your W-2 from the "Main Menu" by clicking on the Tax Statement (W-2) option. If you have trouble reading the graphic version of your W-2, you can click on the "Text Version" link. The text version of your W-2 lists all your W-2 data items in a single column.

There are instructions on how to print your W-2 located below the on-line display of your electronic W-2. If your W-2 is cut off at any margin, go to the myPay Home Page to adjust the margins of your browser. Once the myPay Home Page is opened, access the "File" dropdown menu and select "Page Setup" for the best printing results. For Internet Explorer begin with setting the Top and Bottom margins at ".50" inches and the Right and Left margins at ".25" inches. For Netscape, begin with setting the Top and Bottom margins at ".08" inches and the Right and Left margins at ".10" inches.

For printing the W-2C on Internet Explorer, begin with setting the Top and Bottom margins at ".80" inches and the Right and Left margins at ".25" inches. For Netscape, begin with setting the Top and Bottom margins at ".08" inches and the Right and Left margins at ".10" inches.

For Internet Explorer and Netscape if you see a URL, page number, etc, on your printed copy use "Page Setup" again to clear out the Header and Footer information being requested by your Browser.

For all other printing issues, please contact the DFAS Centralized Customer Support Unit at 1-800-390-2348, or **commercial** at (216) 522-5122, or **Defense Switching Network (DSN)** at 580-5122.

RESTORATION OF FORFEITED ANNUAL LEAVE

Civilian employees normally forfeit unused annual leave in excess of 240 hours at the end of the leave year. Employees may have forfeited leave restored to them if the leave was scheduled in advance with the employee subsequently being denied the opportunity to take that scheduled leave due to the exigencies of public business, a lengthy period of illness, or an administrative error. In cases of the leave being denied due to an exigency of public business, that leave must have been prior to the end of the leave year. i.e. November 28, 2004 (5 CFR 630.308)

FEHB Open Season

Open season for the FEHB Program will be November 8 thru December 13, 2004. Open season elections will be effective January 9, 2005.

There are many significant plan changes that will take place in the 2005 to include terminations of plans and plans reducing their service areas by terminating enrollment codes. If your plan falls under either of these categories, you will need to enroll in a plan during the open season in order to retain health benefits coverage.

Some plans will be reducing their service areas without terminating an enrollment. Employees enrolled in those plans may elect another health plan during open season or travel to the plan's remaining service area to receive benefits.

There are at least 11 new health plans that will be available in 2005 for various locations. Employees will want to review the information that will be available at health fairs and on the OPM website to determine eligibility, premiums,

deductibles, services covered, and other pertinent information prior to making a decision to enroll.

Many existing plans will be offering a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) without new enrollment codes. Some existing and/or new plans will be offering a HDHP with new enrollment codes. If your plan is offering a HDHP or the service area is being expanded with a new enrollment code, you must make an enrollment change to enroll in the new code or elect another health plan during the open season. Cimmaron (PX) and Lovelace (Q1) Health Plans of New Mexico merged. Enrollees will be automatically transferred to Q1 unless another plan is selected during open season.

As with any open season, you are encouraged to review your current health plan in order to determine whether it will meet your needs for the upcoming year. Additional information and links to other appropriate websites can be found on https://www.abc.army.mil/

FEHB Frequently Asked Questions

About Dental Coverage

Why do a few health plans have dental benefits and most do not?

A Several years ago we stopped allowing plans to add new dental and vision packages or to increase packages they already had in place. We allow one exception -- when an HMO offers the benefits under their community package of benefits (at no additional cost to members). We do this because we firmly believe that Federal employees are best served by benefit packages that are strong in the traditional areas of hospital, surgical, and medical benefits and that provide protection against significant and largely unforeseeable health care expenditures. Everyone wants to keep premium increases as low as possible so, generally, to increase benefits plans make tradeoffs. We would not want to sacrifice medical benefits to get dental or vision benefits.

It is important that you do not choose a health plan based on dental benefits alone. You may find yourself without other benefits when you need them, which could result in large unexpected medical expenses. Remember to look at the entire benefits package when making your health plan decision.

If my health plan does not have a dental plan, is there any other way I may get one?

▲ Some health plans offer dental and vision benefits separate from the officially offered benefits stated in their FEHB brochures. Such separate benefits are described on the "Non-FEHB Benefits" page in FEHB brochures.

The plans solely determine what is covered and what is excluded and you must pay any premium associated with these benefits directly to the health or dental plan. There is no government contribution toward the premium on non-FEHB benefits. Also, the GEHA health plan and possibly other plans offer a separate dental plan that does not require you to be a member of their health plan. And, occasionally, an agency's employee organization offers dental and vision benefits to the agency's employees. Check with your human resources office.

How can I tell which FEHB plans offer either a regular or a separate dental benefit?

▲ Check their FEHB brochures' index. Regular dental and vision benefits that are part of a health plan's FEHB benefit offering will be in the brochure's benefit sections and on the summary page. Separate dental benefits will only be on the brochure's Non-FEHB Benefits page. Go to our plan choice pages.

About Retirement Coverage

I am going to retire soon. What are the requirements to continue health benefits into retirement?

A. In order for you to continue your health benefits enrollment into retirement, you must: (1) Have retired on an immediate annuity (that is, an annuity which begins to accrue no later than one month after the date of your final separation); and (2) Have been continuously enrolled (or covered as a family member) in any Federal Employees Health Benefits Program plan (not necessarily the same plan) for the five years of service immediately preceding retirement, or if less than five years, for all service since your first opportunity to enroll.

How would I get a waiver of the 5-year coverage requirement to continue health benefits into retirement with buyout legislation?

A. You may not need to write to the Office of Personnel Management. If you think you might qualify for a waiver of the 5-year coverage requirement, contact your human resources office for information. If you meet the requirements, your agency will attach a memorandum to your retirement application stating

that you meet the requirements for waiver by the Office of Personnel Management.

NEW HEALTH CARE OPTION FOR 2005

The OPM has announced a new health care option that will, depending on your own health care and financial priorities, give you additional opportunities to save and better manage your hard-earned dollars. The FEHB Program will offer 18 HDHPs in 2005. These health plans together with a Health Saving Account (HSA) or a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) provide a taxadvantaged savings vehicle for the purpose of paying for your medical expenses.

To learn more about HDHPs, visit OPM's new web site at http://www.opm.gov/hsa/. You will find basic information on HSAs, HRAs, and a chart comparing their features. Additional information will be provided in conjunction with the FEHB Open Season, November 8 through December 13, 2004, in the 2005 Guide to FEHB Plans and in the individual HDHP brochures.



TSP CORNER



REMINDER...TSP Open Season ... The next Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season began October 15 and ends December 31, 2004. During this open season, participants covered by FERS (Federal Employees Retirement System) may elect to contribute to the TSP up to 15% of the basic pay they earn each pay period, up to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) annual limit (\$14,000 for 2005). Participants covered by CSRS may elect to contribute up to 10% of the basic pay they earn each pay period, up to the IRS annual limit (\$14,000 for 2005).

TSP RATES OF RETURN

***************** Rates of Return were updated on October 1, 2004. G Fund F Fund C Fund S Fund Fund September 2004 0.38% 0.29% 1.11% 3.92% 1.00% Last 12 Months* 4.34% 3.61% 13.87% 18.21% 21.63% (10/1/03 - 9/30/04)

• The G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns for the last twelve months assume unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month, and assume that earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DATA

The Army developed an automated emergency contact data base system as a result of the lessons learned from the September 11th terrorist attacks. All Appropriated and Nonappropriated fund civilian employees are reminded to enter their emergency contact information. The instructions can also be found on the Army website, at http://cpol.army.mil. Registration and updates should be completed within 60 days.

Emergency Contact Data Instructions

The emergency data you provide will be stored and made available to only those authorized individuals who will be directly involved in the actual process of notifying your emergency contact(s) and processing or assisting with the necessary documents in the event of injury or death of an employee.

A screen consisting of the necessary data elements is available for you to complete on the Army website, https://cpsapp2.belvoir.army.mil/emercontact/default. asp or via http://cpol.army.mil under "What's New". In order to gain access to the data base and enter your emergency contact information, you will first need to register as a "new user". Your social security number is being used since it is the one account that distinguishes you as an employee without duplication. Please note that when entering your social security number, it will not be displayed on the screen. As you enter your social security number, it will be represented on the screen by asterisks (*).

The next screen will provide you with instructions to establish your password. After you have established your password, you will be able to proceed and enter your emergency contact data. Once you have successfully entered your emergency contact data, you can update and change the information as changes occur. You must enter your user id and password each time you wish to access your account to modify or update your existing data.

As a practical tip, if the primary emergency contact listed is not an immediate relative, it is important for you to inform your emergency contacts in advance about how to locate your next of kin and/or dependents.

Your cooperation is needed to enable your agency to

promptly notify the emergency contact of your choosing. Failure to provide this information could result in delay in the notification to your next of kin in the event of an emergency or death. Disclosure of your social security number is voluntary; however, failure to provide your social security number may delay the notification process. You'll be asked to review your emergency contact data on an annual basis and help keep the information current.

You should also consider updating designation of beneficiary forms if you believe the information is out of date.

TRAVEL CARD GUIDANCE

Mandatory Split Disbursement for Civilian Personnel

On April 23, 2003, the Comptroller, Department of Defense (DoD), issued guidance implementing the provisions of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2003 (Public Law 107-314) requiring DoD travelers, using the government issued travel charge card, to pay their charged expenses using split disbursement at travel settlement. Implementation for civilian personnel was waived until local bargaining requirements had been satisfied.

The Army Civilian Human Resources Agency has notified my office that the Army Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers have advised their Regional Directors that they have completed local bargaining obligations on split disbursement. Therefore, effective immediately, all Army civilian personnel required to use the individually billed travel card must use split disbursement.

Mandatory split disbursement for civilians, as with military personnel, will be accomplished through the travel voucher process. All army travelers required to use the individually billed travel card are responsible for designating an amount equal to the charges on their travel card to be sent to the card issuing bank. Approving/reviewing officials will review travel vouchers and will return for correction vouchers ubmitted by travel cardholders that do not, at a minimum, accurately reflect the reimbursable charges for which travel card use is mandatory.

For more information on split disbursements, go to www.dfas.mil.

"TIPS TO HELP YOU QUIT"



Tobacco use is the most serious risk factor for heart disease, stroke and lung and other cancers, yet it is totally controllable. Simple, right? Wrong. If anyone ever told you that quitting smoking or chewing was easy, don't believe it. It's not easy, but it is worth it. Fortunately, when you understand why it's hard to quit, you can begin to develop ways to make quitting easier and help you stay off tobacco for life.

Understand Withdrawal

Tobacco is addictive, both physically and psychologically and when you quit, you will go through withdrawal. You may experience mood swings, lightheadedness, fatigue, or restlessness, among other symptoms. These physical symptoms last for approximately one week. Knowing what to expect beforehand and understanding that your symptoms will get better in just a few days can help you get through nicotine withdrawal.

Prepare Substitutes

Chewing or Smoking is as much a behavior as it is an addiction. Get ready to substitute other behaviors when you quit: brush your teeth, chew sugarless gum to keep your mouth satisfied, keep your hands busy – take up a hobby like craft making or model-building during leisure times or fiddle with a paperclip, worry beads, a straw or pencil when you're at work.

Seek Support

It always helps to have other people's support for any behavior change. Tell your family, friends, and coworkers that you're quitting. Ask for their encouragement – particularly while you're going through nicotine withdrawal and may be a bit on edge. You might also encourage someone else to try to quit with you and offer each other support.

Keep Busy

Keep your mind busy by planning your entire day. Change your routine so you can avoid the habit. For instance, don't linger over that last cup of coffee in the morning while reading the paper, or sit at the table for a long time after you have finished dinner Go for a walk, play with the kids, or get involved in some other activity. Don't sit in your smoking chair while watching TV.

Reward Yourself

We all enjoy a pat on the back for a job well done. Quitting smoking or chewing whether it is for a day, month, year, or lifetime deserves the same recognition. Rewards are powerful tools toward maintaining a tobacco free lifestyle. The key is to make them readily available and specific. For example: listening to your favorite music, sleeping in, and buying yourself something special, picking up a new hobby or resuming an old one. It doesn't have to cost a lot and is only limited by your imagination.

GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT IS 18 NOV 2004.

If you're thinking about quitting but just hadn't made a final decision when to stop, why not make your quit day a day to remember. You'll have many others joining you and supporting your decision. If you've made the decision to quit but need help in doing so you may contact the Health Promotion Program at 531-6880 to be scheduled for the tobacco cessation program.

Join us for the Great American Smokeout awareness events on 16 & 18 Nov 04 on the 1st and 2nd floors at Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital from 10 AM to 1 PM and on 18 Nov 04 at the Post Exchange from 10 AM to 1 PM. Commit to quit, go cold turkey for 24 hours or help a friend quit.

ARTICLES FOR BULLETIN

If you have any suggestions on topics or issues that you would like addressed in future bulletins, please submit them to one of the following:

1. ogles@polk.army.mil

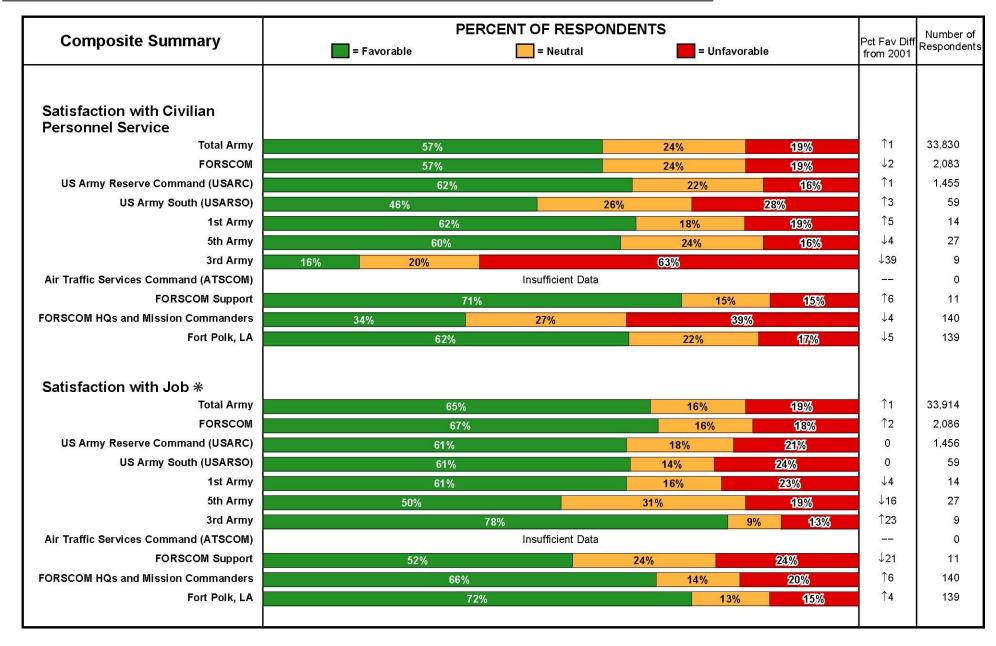
2. Call 531-4020

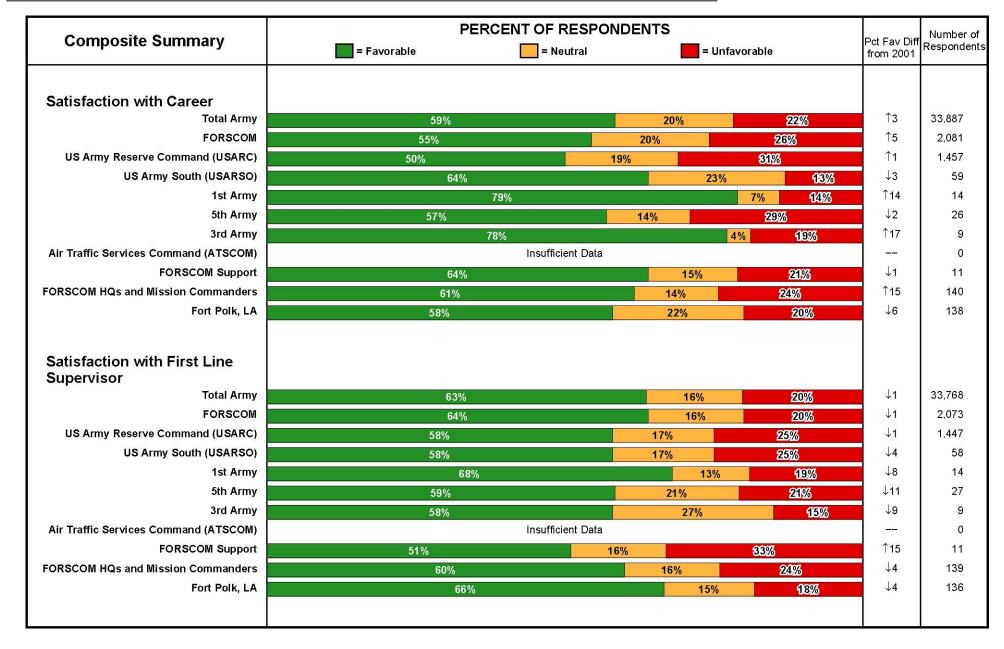
Suggestions will be reviewed and addressed if at all possible.

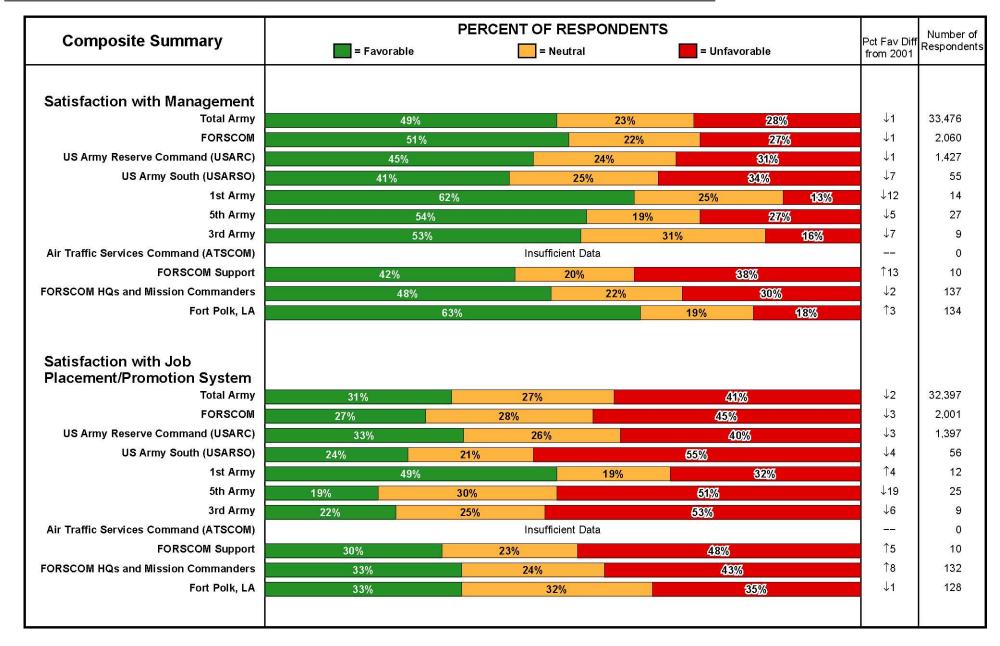
//Original Signed//
DONALD R. MALLET
Director, Civilian Personnel
Advisory Center

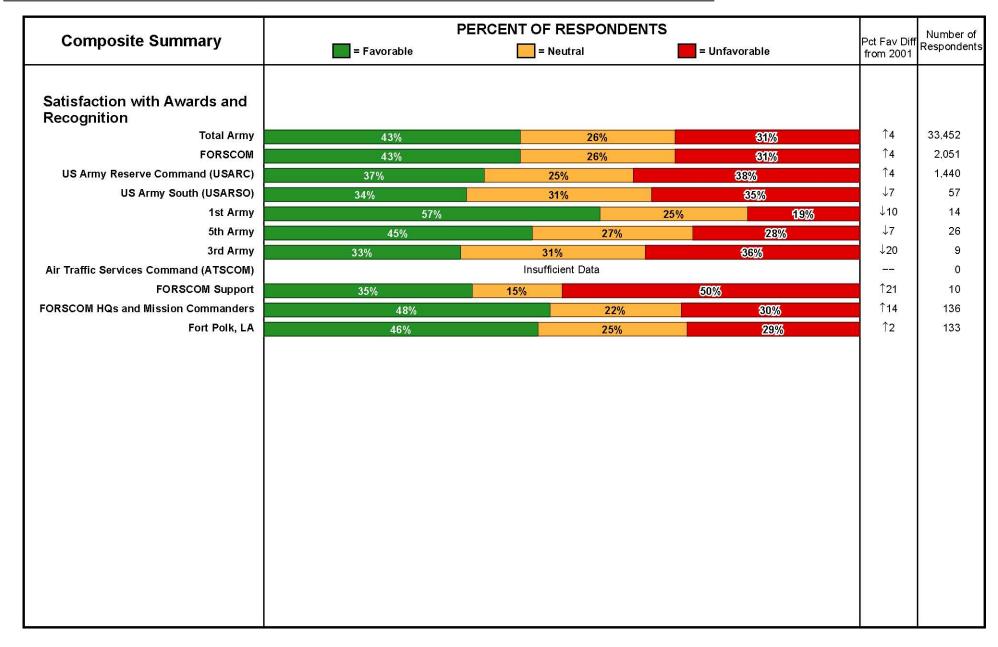


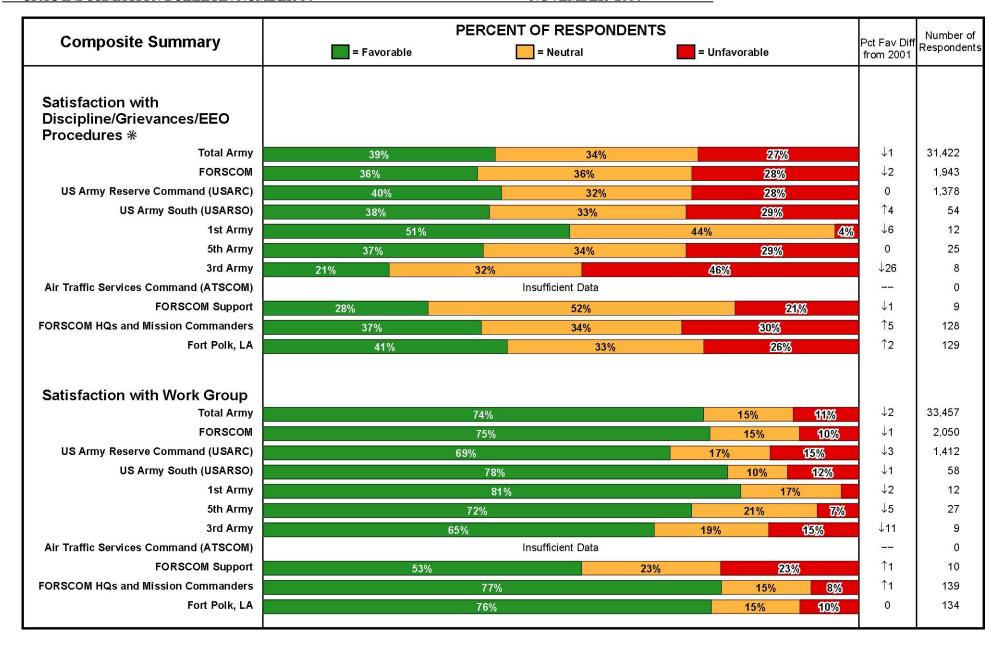
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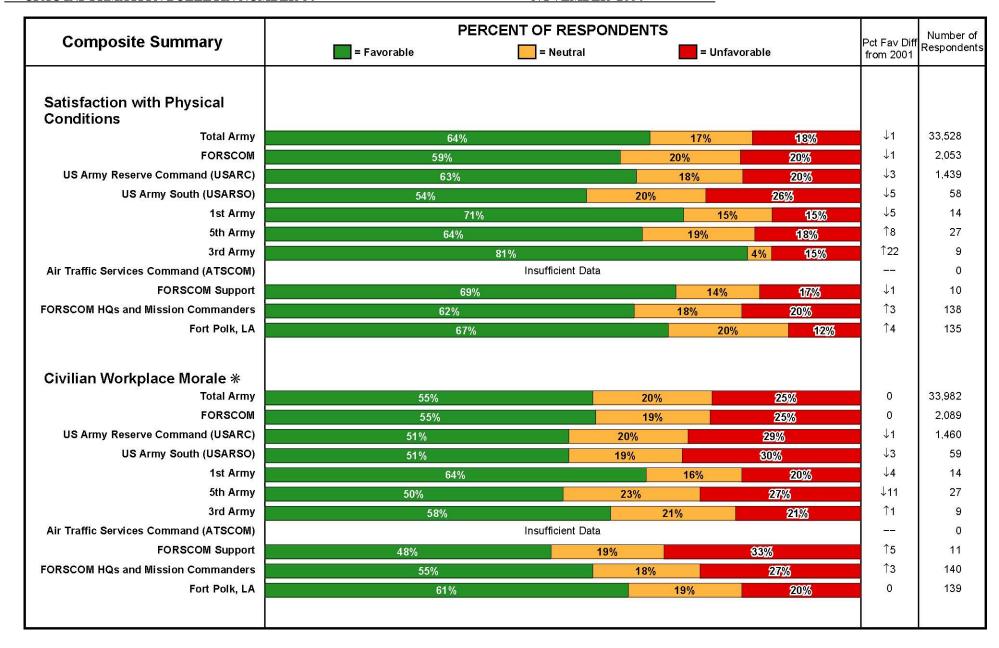


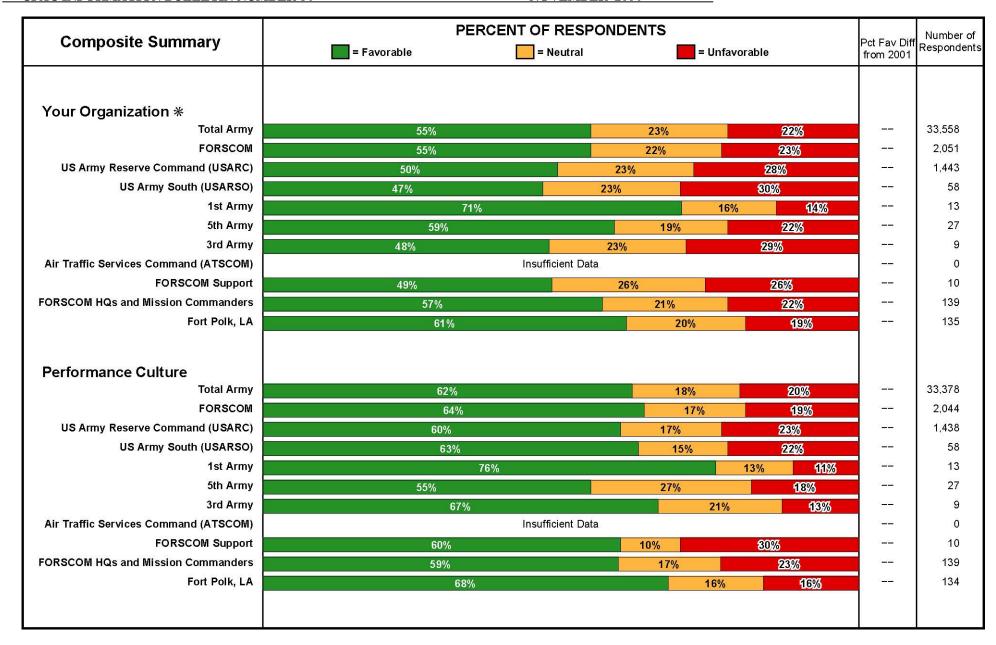


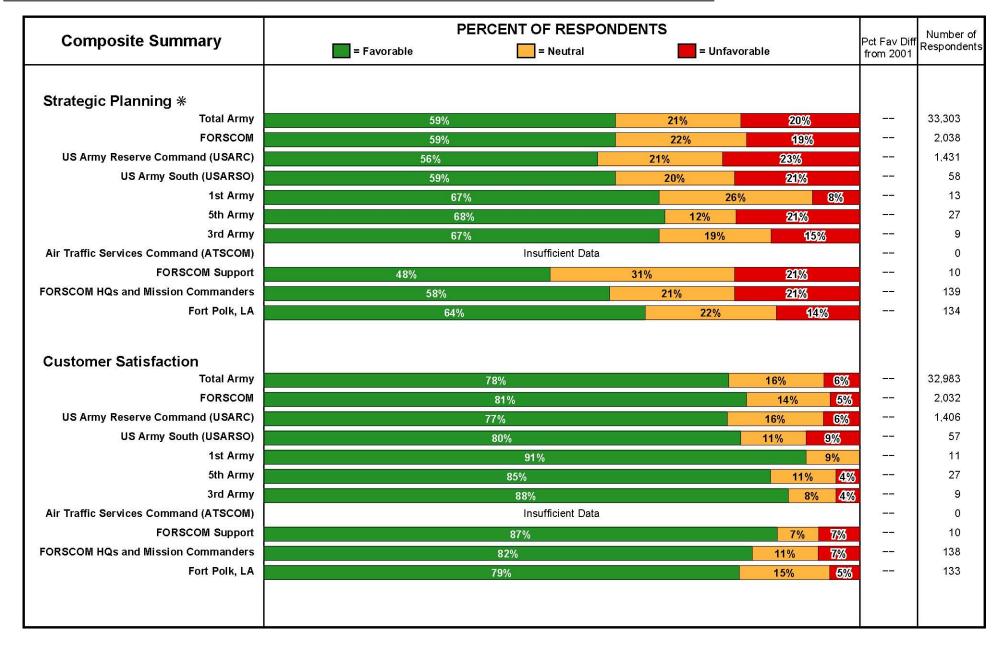


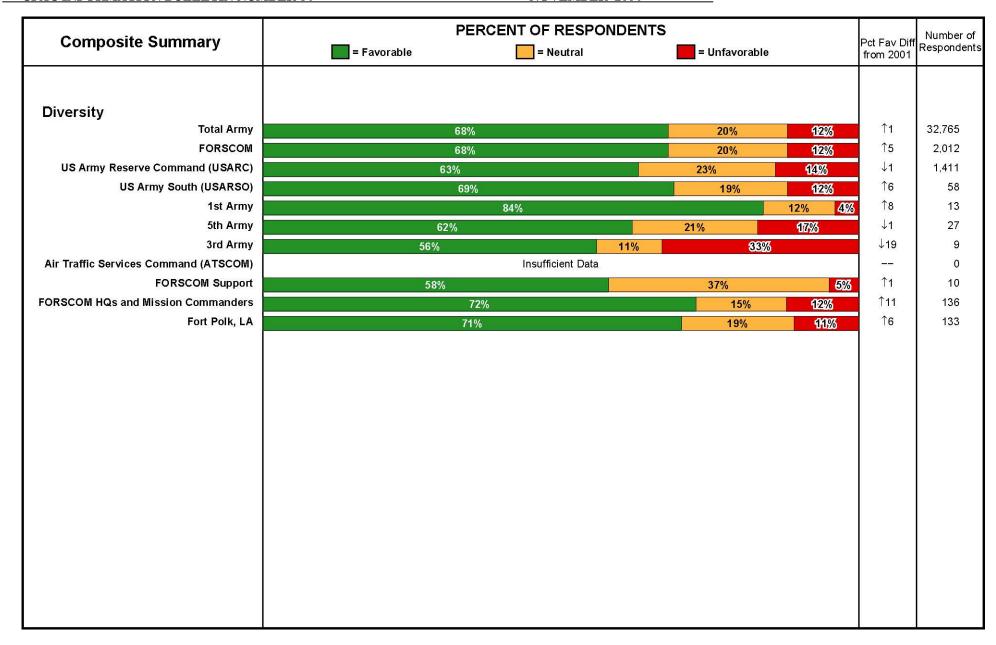












Ten Most Favorable/Unfavorable Items

| | Total Army | %Favorable %Unfavorable |
|-----|--|-------------------------|
| Ten | Most Favorable Items | |
| 28. | I feel free to go to my supervisor with questions or problems about my work. | 74% |
| 27. | My supervisor is competent in handling the technical parts of his/her job. | 74% |
| 14. | My job makes good use of my abilities. | 71% |
| 18. | All in all, I am satisfied with my job. | 67% |
| 16. | I find my work challenging. | 66% |
| 19. | I would recommend that others pursue a career as a civilian with the Federal Government. | 66% |
| 25. | My supervisor gives me the support and backing I need to do my job well. | 64% |
| 23. | My supervisor lets me know how well I am doing my work. | 64% |
| 17. | I am often bored with my job.米 | 63% |
| 26. | My supervisor has a strong interest in the welfare of his/her employees. | 63% |
| Ten | Most Unfavorable Items | |
| 38. | I am satisfied with the processes used to fill vacancies at this installation/activity. | 43% |
| 36. | When promotions are made at this installation/activity, the best-qualified people are selected. | 43% |
| 37. | Employees at this installation/activity are treated fairly with regard to job placements and promotions. | 40% |
| 35. | Employees at this installation/activity have an equal chance to compete for promotions. | 38% |
| 33. | Management rewards employees who show initiative and innovation. | 35% |
| 29. | My supervisor provides me with career counseling. | 33% |
| 32. | Management makes timely decisions. | 32% |
| 34. | Management keeps employees informed. | 30% |
| 21. | I would recommend that others pursue a career as a civilian with this organization. | 27% |
| 15. | I frequently think about quitting my job.** | 25% |
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| | | |

| | FORSCOM | %Favorable %Unfavorable |
|-------------|--|-------------------------|
| Ten | Most Favorable Items | |
| 28. | I feel free to go to my supervisor with questions or problems about my work. | 74% |
| 14. | My job makes good use of my abilities. | 73% |
| 27. | My supervisor is competent in handling the technical parts of his/her job. | 73% |
| 18. | All in all, I am satisfied with my job. | 70% |
| 16. | I find my work challenging. | 68% |
| 17. | I am often bored with my job.₩ | 65% |
| 25. | My supervisor gives me the support and backing I need to do my job well. | 65% |
| 23. | My supervisor lets me know how well I am doing my work. | 65% |
| 26. | My supervisor has a strong interest in the welfare of his/her employees. | 64% |
| 22. | My supervisor clearly outlines the goals and priorities for my work. | 63% |
| T an | Most Unfavorable Items | |
| 38. | I am satisfied with the processes used to fill vacancies at this installation/activity. | 47% |
| 36. | When promotions are made at this installation/activity, the best-qualified people are selected. | 47% |
| 37. | Employees at this installation/activity are treated fairly with regard to job placements and promotions. | 45% |
| 35. | Employees at this installation/activity have an equal chance to compete for promotions. | 45% |
| 33. | Management rewards employees who show initiative and innovation. | 34% |
| 29. | My supervisor provides me with career counseling. | 32% |
| 21. | I would recommend that others pursue a career as a civilian with this organization. | 30% |
| 32. | Management makes timely decisions. | 30% |
| 34. | Management keeps employees informed. | 28% |
| 20. | I would recommend that others pursue a career as a civilian with the Army. | 25% |
| 20. | Thought too mind that out of purpose a current as a civilian with the 7 thing. | 23% |
| | | |
| | | |

| | Fort Polk, LA | %Favorable %Unfavorable |
|-----|--|-------------------------|
| Ten | Most Favorable Items | |
| 28. | I feel free to go to my supervisor with questions or problems about my work. | 79% |
| 14. | My job makes good use of my abilities. | 77% |
| 17. | I am often bored with my job.** | 75% |
| 18. | All in all, I am satisfied with my job. | 74% |
| 27. | My supervisor is competent in handling the technical parts of his/her job. | 73% |
| 16. | I find my work challenging. | 72% |
| 30. | Management is competent. | 71% |
| 31. | Management treats employees with respect and consideration. | 69% |
| 23. | My supervisor lets me know how well I am doing my work. | 68% |
| 26. | My supervisor has a strong interest in the welfare of his/her employees. | 67% |
| Ten | Most Unfavorable Items | |
| 38. | I am satisfied with the processes used to fill vacancies at this installation/activity. | 40% |
| 37. | Employees at this installation/activity are treated fairly with regard to job placements and promotions. | 36% |
| 36. | When promotions are made at this installation/activity, the best-qualified people are selected. | 32% |
| 35. | Employees at this installation/activity have an equal chance to compete for promotions. | 31% |
| 29. | My supervisor provides me with career counseling. | 27% |
| 33. | Management rewards employees who show initiative and innovation. | 26% |
| 21. | I would recommend that others pursue a career as a civilian with this organization. | 22% |
| 23. | My supervisor lets me know how well I am doing my work. | 21% |
| 32. | Management makes timely decisions. | 20% |
| 15. | I frequently think about quitting my job.* | 20% |
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